



SEATTLE PARKS
AND RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Fall 2003

WALKING OUR TALK

Note from Ken Bounds

Clean Green Custodians Win Seattle Management Award!

The Citywide Janitorial Commodity Team has completed two years and the first phase of its work to test and recommend safe, effective and budget friendly green cleaning products for use in all City departments. Commodity Team members are from Parks, SPU, City Light, Fleets and Facilities, and the Library. Commodity team members reviewed products for "total cost": quality, social and environmental goals, and price. The Seattle Management Award panel recognized the Janitorial Commodity Team with its 2003 SMA Innovation and Change Management Award at a luncheon December 10, for their work engaging custodial staff throughout the city to field-test products that reduce toxic exposure for staff and public and prevent toxics in our water.

Parks custodian members of the City Janitorial Commodity Team (**Debi Belt**, **Meg Miller**, and **Robert Verdecias** — see photo) and Parks custodian testers of green cleaning products (**Sue Hare**, **Amanuel Hailom**, **Anthony Robinson**, **Michele Parker**, and **Brenda Brown**), completed their work and recommended three lines of cleaning products that have been tested by Parks staff in office buildings, community centers, and comfort stations.

Products approved are for cleaning glass, restrooms, and toilets, for disinfection, and for general purpose cleaning. Floor product testing is the next item on the Commodity Teams' agenda. The Department of Social and Health Services is reviewing the Material Safety Data Sheets for these products for use in our child care programs.

Our PRO, PARC, and ET committees have approved the move to green cleaners in Parks facilities in February 2004. I applaud the work of our custodians in making our facilities safer for staff and customers, and for taking care of the environment!

Ken Bounds, Superintendent



Seattle Management Award recipients (left to right) Debi Belt, Robert Verdecias and Meg Miller.

Conservation Confidential

At my corner store, firewood and Duraflame logs are about the same price. Which is better to burn?

A manufactured log. Wood smoke is one of the most harmful air pollutants (along with diesel exhaust) in our winter air. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency advises against burning wood of any kind. Fine particles in wood smoke cause respiratory problems, limit visibility, damage ecosystems, and cause aesthetic damage to structures. So if you really want a cozy fire in your fireplace at home, manufactured logs emit much less pollution, and are safer for your family and friends. For more information, please contact the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency at (206) 343-8800, or the American Lung Association of Washington at (206) 441-5100.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Send us your conservation questions — parkses@seattle.gov



Falling for Cleaner Air

What can you do to continue to support clean air this fall and winter? You can eliminate unnecessary vehicle idling when "warming up" your vehicle in the morning. Rather than running your vehicle for 10 to 30 minutes to clear the windows of morning frost and condensation, please take 30 to 60 seconds to scrape, de-ice or otherwise dry your windows manually **before** starting your vehicle. Manually removing frost and condensation could save between one and three gallons of gas per week, and eliminate more than 60 pounds of carbon dioxide and pollutants from being generated in your maintenance yard during the early morning hours.

Please keep in mind that emissions from an idling vehicle are doubly harmful this fall and winter, as combustion and exhaust treatment is much less efficient during initial startup in cold weather. So please mind your idle, and our new idle reduction policy, by allowing no more than five minutes of warm-up time for unleaded vehicles, and 10 minutes for diesel. Less is always more! For details on best idling practices, please contact a member of our Parks Idle Reduction Task Force, or call **Adam Cole** at 733-9701. Westbridge warehouse stocks ice scrapers and window de-icer for your vehicle.

Starflower Shines in Seattle

Seattle's park lovers have many reasons to thank the Starflower Foundation. Since 1996 the Foundation has worked with Adopt-a-Park and school groups to establish Pacific Northwest native plant landscapes along Lake Washington and in West Seattle. Starflower's goal is to inspire understanding, appreciation, and preservation of Pacific Northwest native ecosystems, with humans as an integral part of these ecosystems.

The Starflower Foundation supports citizen-driven restoration and education projects



by providing in-kind technical support and materials (like native plants). All projects are done on public land — mostly in Seattle parks.

As part of their commitment, Starflower supports Adopt-a-Park groups by helping maintain the projects for three to five years so that the native plant landscapes are well established. The Foundation also encourages participation by the community and school groups in taking advantage of educational opportunities during the various stages of the project.

Bob Warner, Park's Teens for Recreation and Environmental Conservation (TREC) Coordinator, says he especially appreciates Starflower because they don't just write a check; the Foundation's staff come out themselves with the volunteers and get their hands dirty taking care of the landscapes.

Pro Parks Levy at Work

As Seattle grows, parks and green spaces become even more important as folks look for open spaces where they can relax, commune with nature and spend time with their families and friends. Our goal is to maintain at least one acre of park land for every 100 citizens. The Pro Parks Levy, approved by Seattle voters in 2000, is providing \$31 million to purchase land in Seattle, including properties for new parks in densely populated neighborhoods. In keeping



Mayor Nickels, Ken Bounds and others speak at the acceptance of a new Parks property above Smith Cove in Magnolia.

with voter expectations, Levy funds have leveraged another \$11.7 million from grants and private sources for open space acquisition.

Since 2000, Parks has preserved more than 28 acres, including properties for new neighborhood

parks in Northgate, the Central Area, Green Lake, Fremont, Mount Baker, Ballard, and the Rainier Valley. In August, we acquired significant properties from the Navy at Magnolia's Smith Cove. Acquisitions to date also include wooded hillsides in Delridge and Leschi, along Thornton Creek, and in the West Duwamish Greenbelt, where the acquisition will help preserve one of Seattle's largest wildlife corridors. Our Parks acquisition team is **Donald Harris, Bill Blair, Catherine Anstett, and Lise Ward**. For more information about Pro Parks acquisition projects, please call 206-615-0386, or visit www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/acquisition.htm.

Rainier Beach Pool

Environmental stewardship hit the decks at Rainier Beach Pool when **Shawn Owens**, then the acting Assistant Coordinator, launched a public campaign this past summer focused on clean swimming practices. An informational flier and a bulletin board display were designed to help pool users understand the link between the health of the pool and what they bring to the pool. Pre-swim showers, clean bathing suits, and removing shoes before entering the pool deck mean fewer germs and less dirt go into the pool. Fewer germs and dirt means fewer chemicals are used. Fewer chemicals in the pool lead to fewer chemicals entering the environment, either through splash out or evaporating from the pool. Clean swimmers mean a cleaner and safer environment.

Additional recommended actions that keep the pool healthy include: stay home when you're sick, keep food and drink off the pool deck, and use waterproof diapers on toddlers. For more information about clean swimming practices, please contact any Seattle Parks pool or check out the "Healthy Swimming Behaviors" web page at www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming.

Composting



Composting is often associated with home gardeners, but did you know that composting is a regular routine for many Parks staff who maintain natural areas, landscapes, and athletic fields? Senior Gardener **Rory Denovan** started composting at 82nd

& Densmore to cut disposal and purchasing costs, reuse valuable plant resources, and decrease the amount of organic waste going into the dumpster. Organic material in landfills decays slowly to make methane gas and acidic leachate, both pollutants. We use the nutrient rich compost for many purposes, including mulch, soil amendment, erosion control, soil temperature, and pH regulation.

Senior Gardener **Bob Baines** helped refine the composting process at Densmore, and he's been a key facilitator in encouraging staff to participate. **Phil Alger** drives the whole activity, literally and figuratively, by making sure the material is turned and mixed properly. Approximately 30 cubic yards are working at any one time, and it takes four to six months for it to "age" into usable product. "Our next goal is to set up a screening system for the finished product to help remove sticks and rocks," according to Rory. There are other sites in the Parks system that compost — the Washington Park Arboretum, Japanese Garden, and Genesee Park, to name a few. Thanks to the efforts of our staff, composting saves Parks money and conserves natural resources.

Walking Our Talk is published three times a year for the employees of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Our goal is to inspire us all by highlighting the people and programs that make Seattle Parks a leader in environmental stewardship. We welcome your input — please send us story ideas, kudos, anecdotes, and photos about activities you or your co-workers are doing to help make our urban environment healthier. Ideas or questions? Contact us at parkses@seattle.gov, or call Leila Wilke at 206/733-9707. Editor: Dewey Potter
Writers: Leila Wilke, Dawn Blanch, Belinda Chin, Adam Cole
Graphic Designer: Margarite D. Hargrave
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Superintendent: Ken Bounds
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